

The 2026 SAP Data Management Report:

Readiness for S/4HANA and AI

Syniti's latest research explores how organisations are implementing data management strategies to support business transformation success



Be knowledgeable Be passionate Be human

LEARN ▪ NETWORK ▪ COLLABORATE ▪ INFLUENCE



Foreword

by Chris Gorton, SVP and MD Syniti EMEA & APJ



Organisations are more data-driven than ever before. With businesses accelerating digital transformation, migrating core systems and preparing for opportunities presented by AI, the quality, accessibility and governance of data have become strategic priorities for CIOs.

Our long-term collaboration with UKISUG on this survey is important. Now in its third year, we are able to start comparing results across annual surveys, providing valuable insight into how organisations' approaches to data are evolving.

This year's findings are encouraging. The number of organisations reporting that they have a comprehensive data strategy in place continues to increase, building on a year-on-year trend towards more mature approaches to data management. Data is increasingly recognised not simply as a by-product of systems and processes, but as a critical asset.

But the survey results suggest this growing maturity perhaps brings a new level of awareness. As CIOs look more closely at their data, many are discovering complexities and inconsistencies that were previously hidden. Paradoxically, organisations with the most advanced approaches to strategy are often the most conscious of the quality of their data.

With the 2027 SAP S/4HANA migration deadline imminent and with data transformation a priority against the backdrop of AI, these limitations are likely to become even more visible. Migration programmes often reveal the state of enterprise data, exposing duplication, fragmentation and governance gaps that can complicate and delay projects if not addressed early.

This growing awareness is borne out in the survey results and it matters. It is no longer enough for organisations simply to hold vast amounts of data. They need to expect more from their data - not simply that it exists, but that it is reliable, consistent and truly business-ready.

And that requires more than technology alone. Strong data governance, clear ownership and consistent standards across the organisation are essential to ensure that data can be trusted and used effectively. In my experience of supporting organisations through complex and major transformations, the ones that succeed are those that treat data as a strategic foundation: embedding governance, quality and accountability throughout every initiative. By taking a Data First approach, maintaining focus on quality before, during and after transformation, organisations can truly unlock data's value and potential.

Introduction

More than ever, organisations are undertaking digital transformation projects to increase operational efficiency and deliver a better customer experience. At the same time, many are prioritising AI investments to accelerate existing workflows and improve their decision-making processes. For these projects to deliver success, organisations need access to reliable, accurate data. As a result, many organisations are developing comprehensive data management strategies to support data transformation, SAP S/4HANA migration and the wider adoption of AI tools.

As organisations modernise their internal systems and migrate to new platforms, now is the time to act to address ongoing data quality challenges. These range from issues with significant operational impact to minor problems that impede, but don't halt, business processes — though they still carry an associated cost. Ultimately, all of these data-related issues can negatively impact the organisations that don't take steps to remedy them.

To better understand the data challenges facing SAP users, we surveyed senior IT decision-makers at 46 SAP user organisations across the UK and Ireland. The research explores their current strategies, the technologies they are adopting and how data management is underpinning their migrations to SAP S/4HANA.



Section 1.

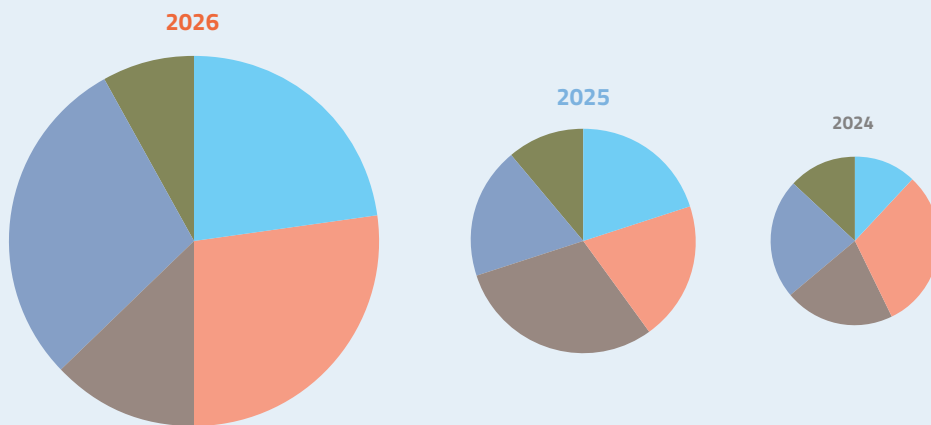
Organisations are prioritising data governance, management and quality to leverage next-gen technologies

Data quality is top of the agenda for many organisations

Good data is key to building a successful, modern business. With this understanding of the value high-quality, well managed data can yield, an increasing number of organisations are maturing their data strategies, with 50% now implementing a data strategy that covers most of, or the entire organisation. This is up from 40% last year.

Which of the following best describes your organisation's data strategy?

	2026	2025	2024
● It is comprehensive covering the entire organisation	23%	20%	12%
● It is developed covering most of the organisation	27%	20%	31%
● It is developed covering part of the organisation	13%	30%	21%
● It is at the planning stage	29%	19%	23%
● We don't have a data strategy	8%	11%	13%



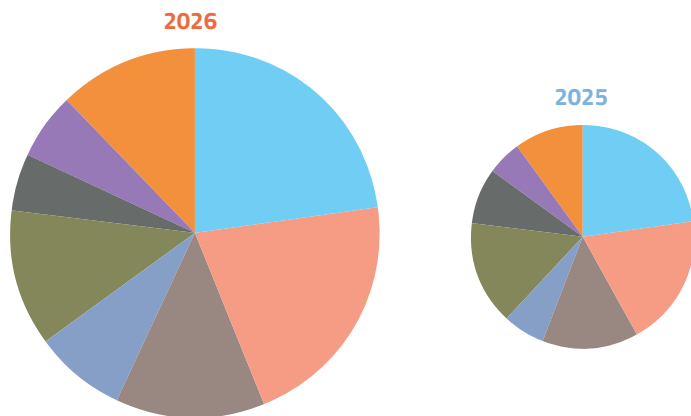
Data governance and compliance remain organisations' main concern around data management. Alongside this data accuracy and consistency are also a pressing need. At the same time, an increasing number of organisations are looking to optimise their use of AI to support their data management, up to 12% from 10% last year.

72% of organisations agree that data governance and compliance are their main concern around data management

What are your organisation's most pressing data management needs currently?

- Data accuracy and consistency
- Data governance
- Dashboards / Visualisation
- To identify growth opportunities
- To reduce costs/wastage across the organisation
- Identify risks/threats to the organisation
- Adopt continuous integration/continuous development methodology
- To optimise the use of AI to support data management

2026	2025
23%	23%
21%	19%
13%	14%
8%	6%
12%	15%
5%	8%
6%	5%
12%	10%



Quality and accessibility are cited as the two biggest challenges organisations face realising additional value from their data. In fact, the majority of organisations (94%) believe data silos are preventing them from making real-time decisions.

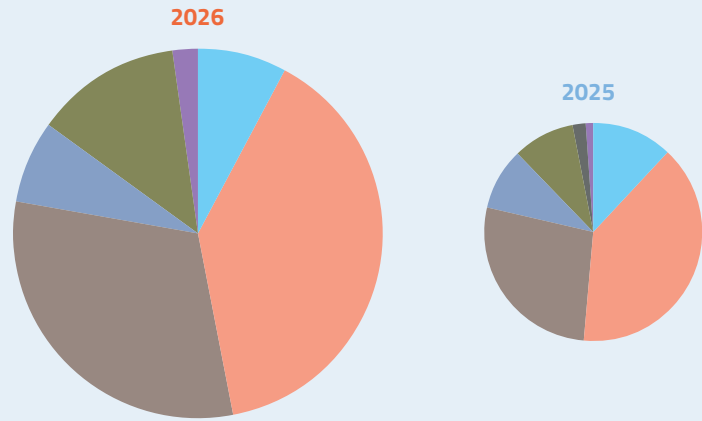
Interestingly, a growing number of organisations said that increasing data volumes are becoming a challenge. This may partly reflect growing AI adoption, which is generating new types of data that organisations had not previously needed to manage.

94% of organisations believe siloed data prevents them from making real-time decisions



What challenges does your organisation face realising additional value from its data?

	2026	2025
● We are unable to process and analyse the data fast enough	8%	12%
● Data quality – we face challenges around data accuracy and consistency	39%	39%
● We face a challenge in gaining business intelligence from our data because it is spread across different (cloud and on-premise) environments and platforms	31%	27%
● Data storage costs – the volume and velocity of data we have is becoming increasingly expensive to store	7%	9%
● We have so much data we don't know where to start in terms of gaining additional value from it	13%	9%
● We face no challenges	0%	2%
● Other	2%	1%



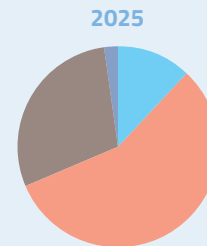
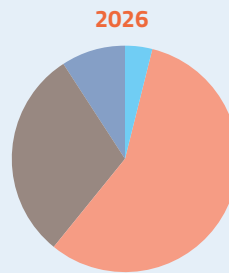
Overall, organisations are less confident in their data quality and accessibility, compared to 2025. In fact, only 4% are very confident in their data quality, while only 2% are very confident in the accessibility of their data. This suggests that as organisations progress further with their transformation programmes and AI initiatives, they are realising that the quality and accessibility of their data is not as strong as they originally thought.



How confident are you with the quality and accessibility of your organisation's data?

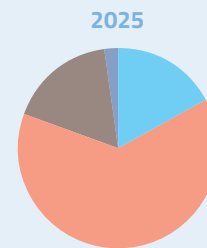
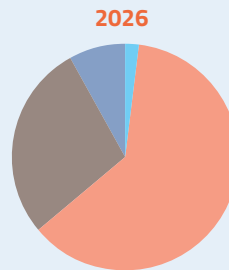
Data quality:

	2026	2025
Very confident	4%	12%
Somewhat confident	57%	56%
Not very confident	30%	29%
Not at all confident	9%	3%



Data accessibility:

	2026	2025
Very confident	2%	17%
Somewhat confident	62%	63%
Not very confident	28%	17%
Not at all confident	8%	3%

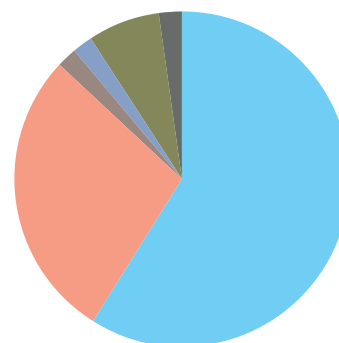


Organisations need good data to provide the foundation to effective AI – and they know this. Nearly 9 in 10 organisations (89%) recognise that challenges relating to data management will decelerate their AI adoption processes – which will also slow the value creation process.

89% agree that data management challenges will slow the adoption of AI technologies at their organisation

How important is data quality in ensuring your organisation realises full value from its AI investments?

	2026
Very important	59%
Somewhat important	28%
Not very important	2%
Not at all important	2%
Don't know	7%
Not applicable – we aren't investing in AI	2%



Alongside data management, there is now a widespread recognition of the importance of data quality to drive ROI from AI investments, with 87% of organisations understanding the importance of data quality for AI.

Against this backdrop it is hardly surprising that almost four in five (79%) organisations see data transformation as a priority. Many projects – such as S/4HANA migrations or AI pilots – offer an opportunity for businesses to reset their data management strategies.

79% of organisations agree that data transformation is a priority

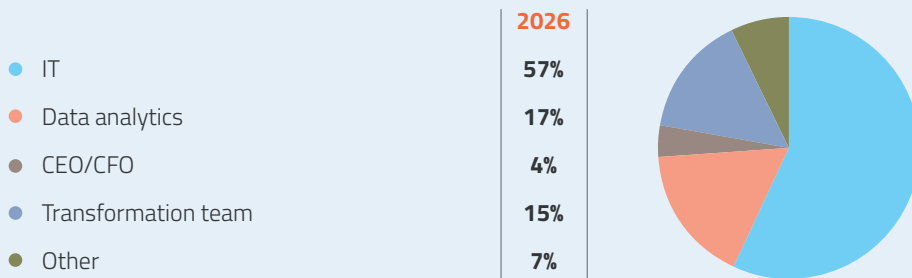
Section 2.

How are organisations building their data strategy? As organisations mature in their use of data, more are implementing dedicated data management functions.

Has your organisation got a dedicated data management function?

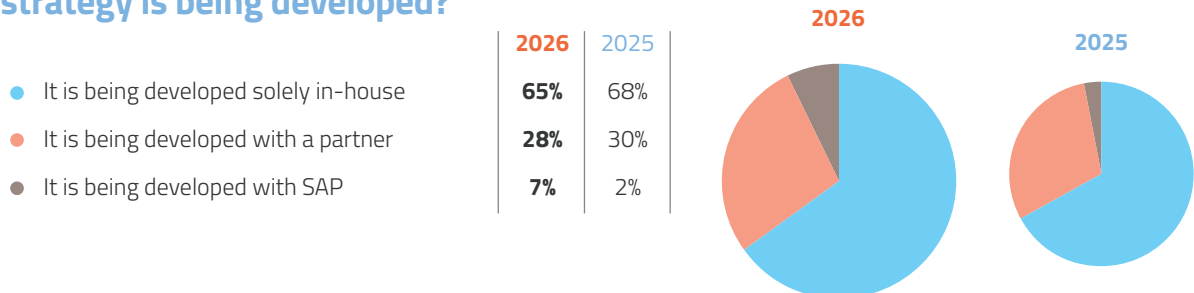


Which department is responsible for your organisation's data strategy?



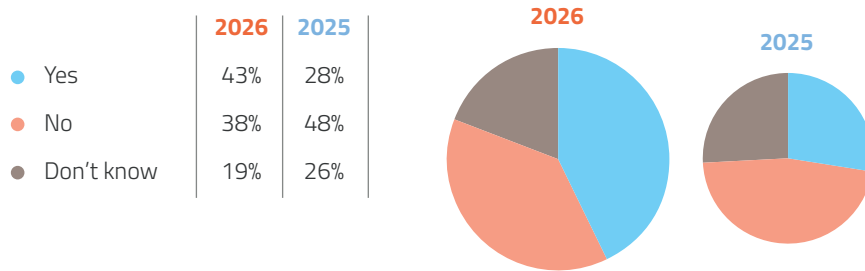
In over half of the organisations surveyed (57%), data strategy is still owned by IT teams. Yet the reality today is that data strategy should not sit solely with IT because data is a business asset that supports decision-making, customer engagement and revenue generation. While IT enables the infrastructure and governance, business leaders should shape the strategy to ensure data is aligned with commercial goals and operational priorities.

Which of the following best describes how your organisation's data strategy is being developed?



It is unsurprising that the majority (65%) of organisations are developing their data strategy in-house. This year, there has been a slight shift in organisations working alongside SAP to develop a data strategy (up from 2% to 7%).

Do you think your organisation has the necessary business/data skills to make effective use of all of its data?

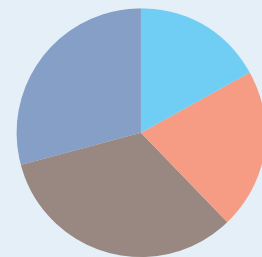


Over the last year organisations have expressed greater confidence that they have the necessary skills to make effective use of all their data (increasing to 43% from 28% in 2025). However, overall, this is still less than half, indicating there is still significant room for improvement.

Which of the following data solutions does your organisation currently use?

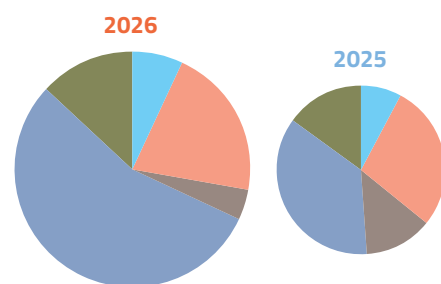
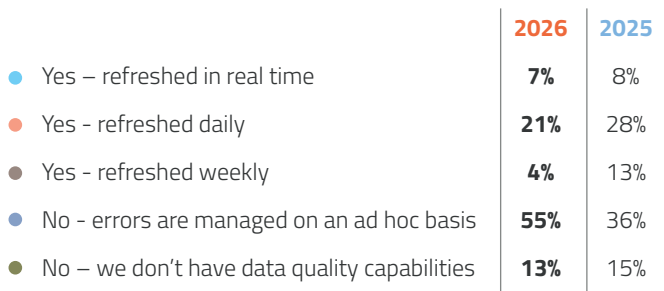
- Data catalogue
- Data quality
- Master data maintenance
- Data migration (to support major transformations or mini projects)

2026
17%
21%
33%
29%



Master data maintenance (33%) and data migration (29%) were the most commonly used data solutions. Despite the importance of data quality to their operations, and their challenges relating to this, only a fifth (21%) of organisations use a dedicated solution to resolve issues related to the quality of their data.

Do you have access to error reports on the data in your system landscape and are these refreshed on a regular basis?

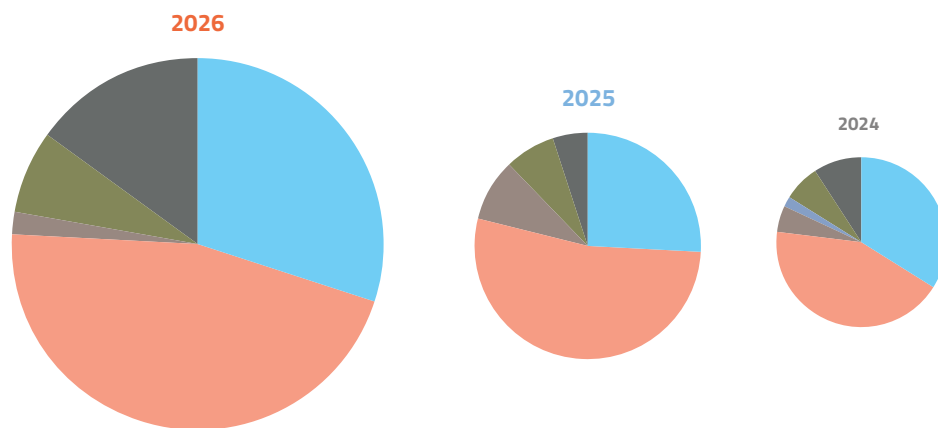
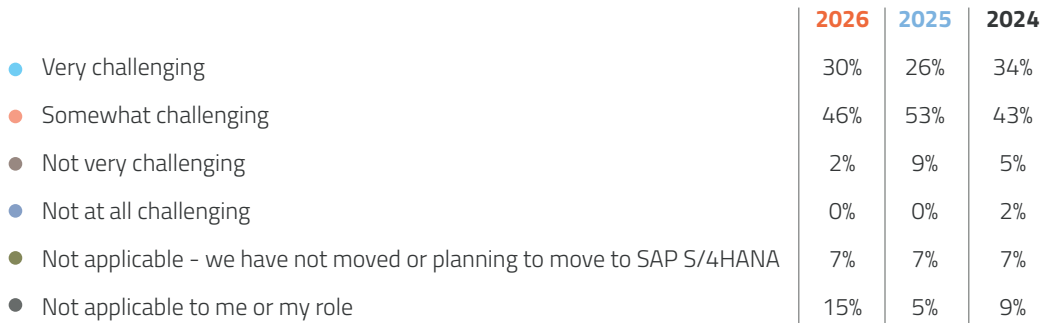


55% of organisations manage their data-related error reports on an ad hoc basis. Although they recognise the challenges associated with data quality, this indicates that many do not have the solutions in place to proactively monitor or resolve these issues.

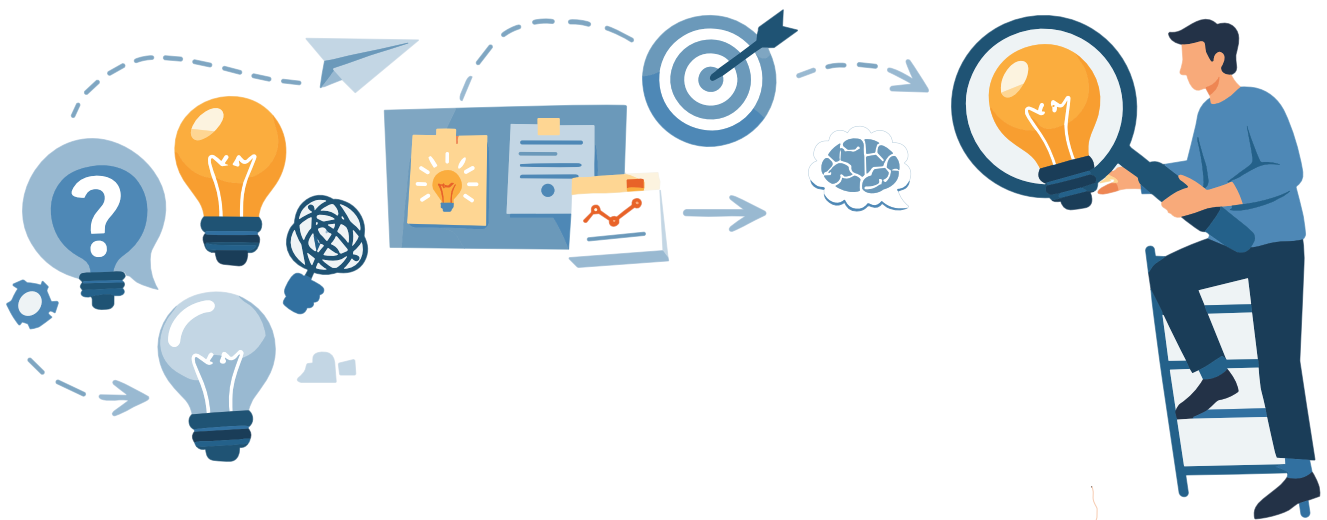
Section 3.

The data management challenges facing SAP organisations

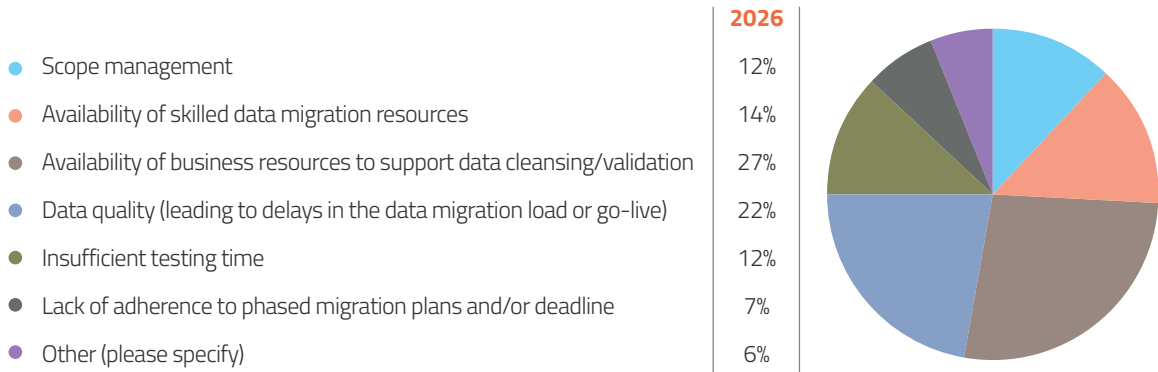
To what extent do you think data management presents a challenge when moving from SAP ECC 6.0 to SAP S/4HANA?



Many SAP organisations are firmly on their S/4HANA journey, with half of UKISUG's members now on S/4HANA, but there are many with critical end-of-life milestones to navigate ahead of key maintenance deadlines in 2027 and 2030. With over three quarters of organisations (76%) recognising the challenges related to data management, now is the time to act.

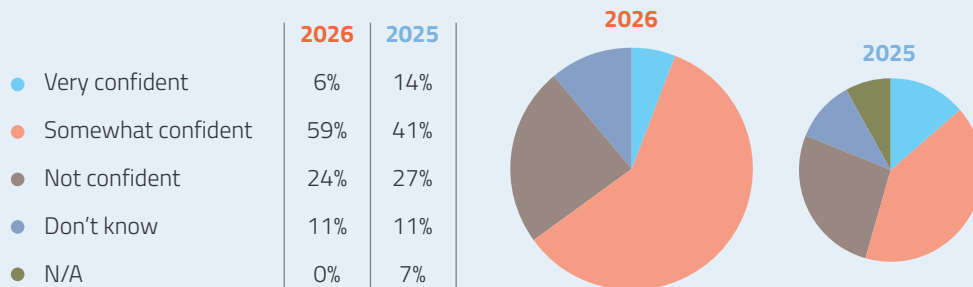


What challenges have you seen and/or experienced when it comes to data migration activities to support an SAP S/4HANA transformation?



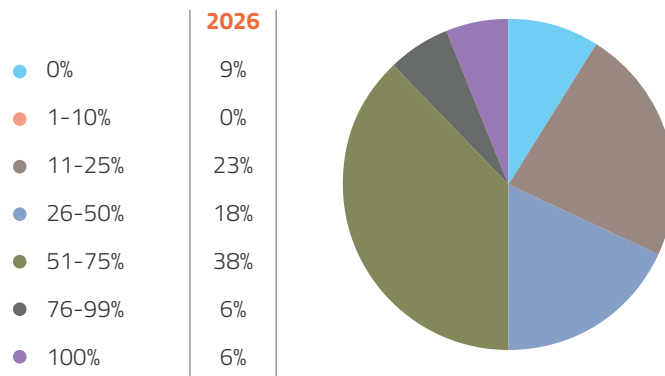
The top challenges organisations have faced in the data migration stage of their S/4HANA transformation have related to the availability of business resources to support data cleansing and validation (27%) and data quality (22%). Therefore, when investigating migration options, it is important to consider solutions that address these specific challenges; not just a technical ETL solution, but a platform that delivers the business-ready data that organisations strive for.

How confident were/are you about your data migration activities ahead of your SAP S/4HANA transformation?



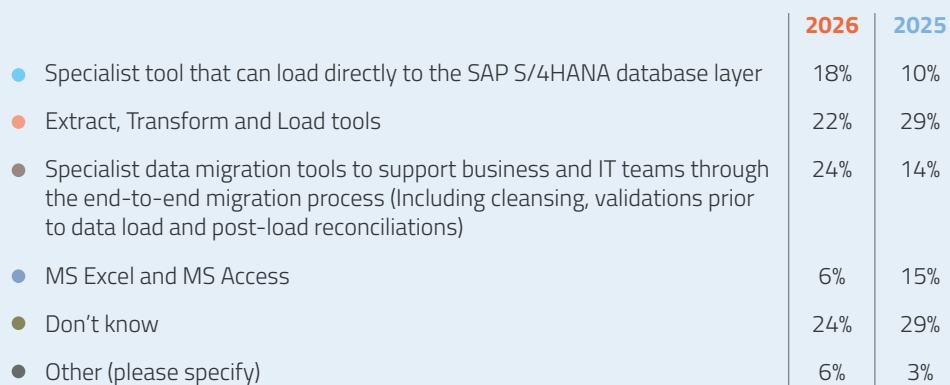
Organisations overall have been slightly more confident about their data migration activities ahead of the SAP S/4HANA transformation. However, 35% of respondents either weren't confident or didn't know.

What proportion of your organisation's data and supporting processes need or have needed to be transformed as part of your SAP S/4HANA migration?

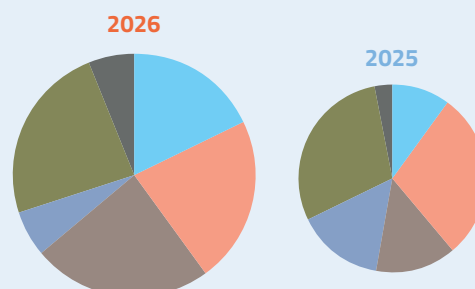


SAP organisations are aware of their need to transform their data – and related processes – as part of their S/4HANA migration, with 9 in 10 recognising the need for some form of transformation. However, the scale of the challenge means this can't be seen as a simple "lift and shift" process. 50% of surveyed organisations believe they need to transform more than half of their data and supporting processes. This will not be an overnight fix and requires organisations to proactively manage their transformation.

What tools did you use or plan to use for data migration?



A quarter (24%) of organisations are using specialist data migration tools to support their business and IT teams through the end-to-end migration process. This increase over the last 12 months indicates a growing acknowledgement that organisations require purpose-built solutions as migrations aren't simply a "lift and shift".

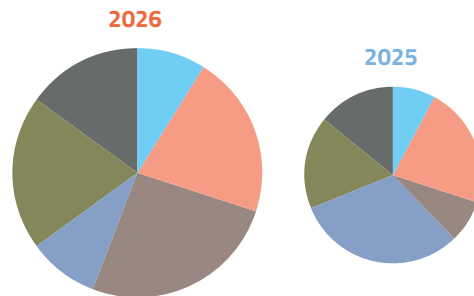


Specifically does your organisation have a data archiving strategy for SAP S/4HANA?

- Yes – we have implemented a data archiving strategy
- Yes – we are planning to implement a data archiving strategy
- Yes – we are planning to implement a data archiving strategy, but it has been postponed at least once
- No – we haven't implemented or planned to implement a data archiving strategy
- No – it's too early to say
- N/A – not migrated to SAP S/4HANA

2026	2025
9%	8%
21%	22%
26%	8%
9%	31%
20%	17%
15%	14%

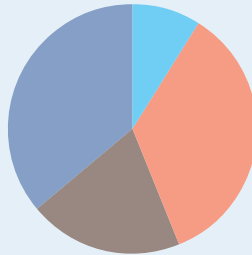
More than half (56%) of organisations have a data archiving strategy for SAP S/4HANA. However, 26% did state that it has been postponed at least once. Ideally, this process should begin 3-6 months after transitioning to S/4HANA and those organisations who do not do this are leaving potentially significant cost savings on the table.



Is your organisation using or planning to use SAP Business Data Cloud?

- Yes (using)
- Yes (planning to)
- No
- Don't know

2026
9%
35%
20%
36%

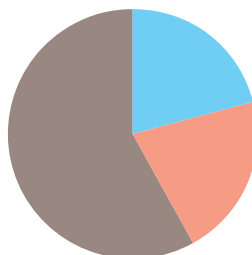


SAP Business Data Cloud (BDC) launched in early 2025 to provide SAP organisations with an AI-ready data foundation. Already there does seem to be significant interest in the product with 44% of organisations already using BDC or planning to.

Are you planning to use SAP Business Data Cloud to manage your organisation's historical data in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

2026
21%
21%
58%



However, when it comes to using SAP BDC to manage an organisations historical data the picture is a lot murkier, with only 21% stating they were planning to and a further 58% stating they didn't know.

In summary? Now is the time to prioritise data quality

Good quality data is crucial to business success. As organisations progress their S/4HANA migrations and look to see returns on their AI investments, their data is in the spotlight. As the research shows many organisations remain concerned about the quality of their data meaning that data transformation is growing priority.

Syniti, part of Capgemini, is the data management expert: putting Data First and driving faster time to value for complex digital transformations such as the move to SAP S/4HANA.

We work with SAP organisations to execute their most business-critical initiatives: prioritising data quality and combining intelligent software and vast data expertise for superior business outcomes. Igniting growth, reducing risk and increasing competitive advantage.

Syniti's silo-free enterprise data management platform supports data migration, data quality, data replication, master data management, analytics, data governance and data strategy in a single, unified solution.

For more information about anything in this report, please get in touch via <https://www.syniti.com/contact-us/>



Be knowledgeable Be passionate Be human

LEARN ▪ NETWORK ▪ COLLABORATE ▪ INFLUENCE

